MARVEL

45

WOLVERINE®
ORIGINS

WAY
BRAITHWAITE
REINHOLD
MANLEY
TROY

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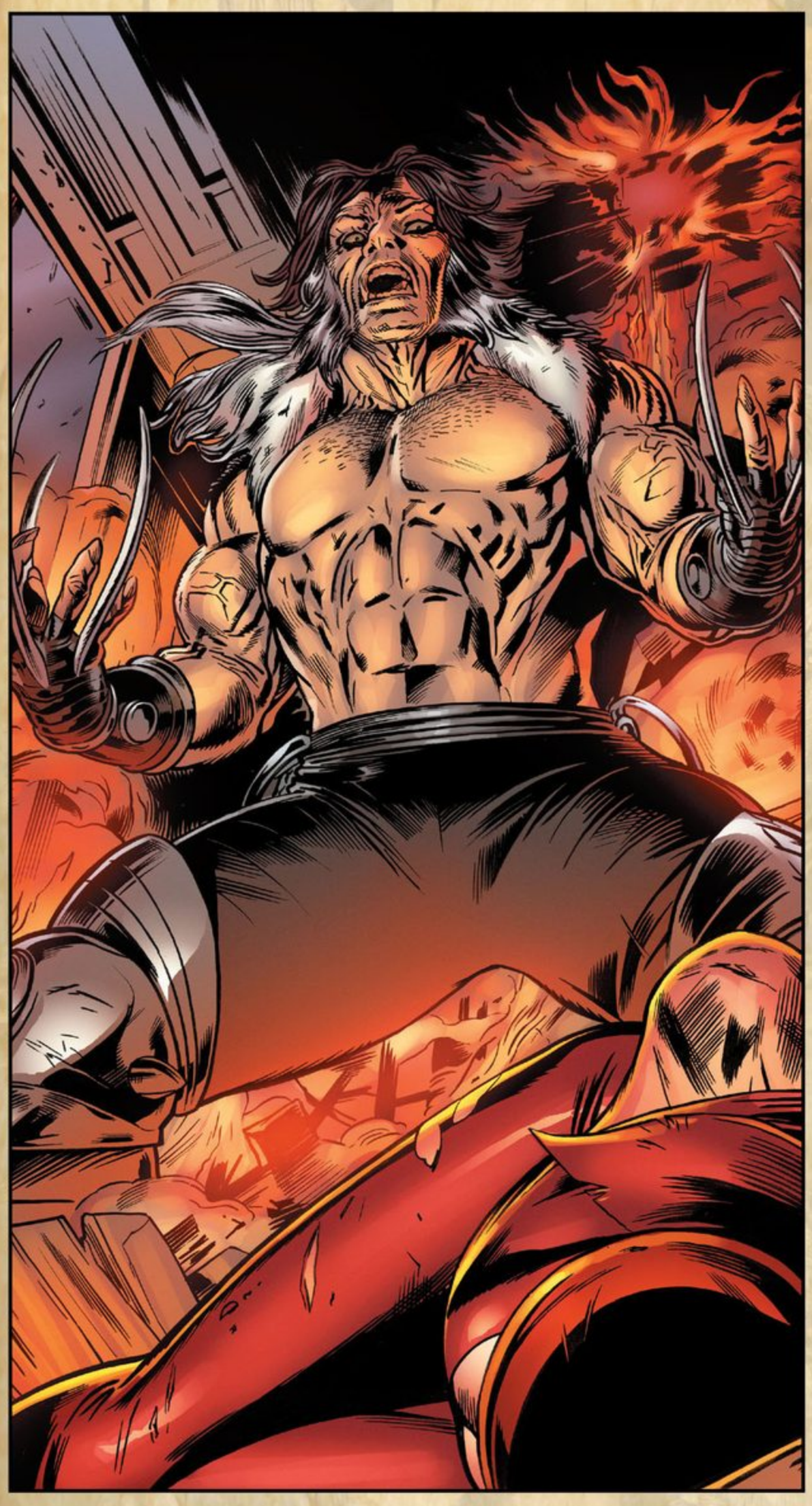
ORIGINS



The mutant Wolverine has spent a century fighting those who would manipulate him for his unique powers—razor-sharp claws, heightened senses, and a healing factor capable of miracles. After repeated brainwashing, torture, and reprogramming, Wolverine's past was as much a mystery to him as to anyone. With those long-lost memories returned to him, Wolverine has set out on a mission to punish the conspirators who have wronged him.

Logan has finally caught up with the mysterious figure known only as Romulus, the man who has been secretly manipulating him his entire life. Logan learns that Romulus's grand scheme is for Logan and Daken—Logan's dangerously misguided son—to fight to the death, deciding who will take Romulus's place at the top of the food chain. To avoid this, Logan is determined to destroy Romulus's empire. But he's gonna need help to do it. Bruce Banner and his Hulk-like son Skaar, the Silver Samurai and the mutant teleporter called Cloak have all agreed to aid Logan in his mission. The next person on his list is Ruby Thursday: a criminal super-genius with a shape-shifting red sphere for a head. But in order for Ruby to be of any help, Logan and Cloak have to bust her out of the super-prison known as the Raft.

After freeing Ruby from her cell, the Raft guards lock down the prison and call in reinforcements in the form of Ares, the God of War, now working for the villainous government figurehead Norman Osborn. An injured Cloak is able to teleport Ruby to a nearby shore while Skaar and Wolverine battle Ares. The pair narrowly escape but when they rendezvous with Cloak, they discover that Ruby has been taken by Romulus!

DANIEL WAY
WRITER

DOUG BRAITHWAITE
PENCILS

BILL REINHOLD
WITH MIKE MANLEY
INKS AND WASHES

ANDY TROY
COLORS

VC'S CORY PETIT
LETTERS & PRODUCTION

BEN OLIVER
COVER ART

JODY LEHEUP
ASSISTANT EDITOR

JEANINE SCHAEFER
EDITOR

AXEL ALONSO
GROUP EDITOR

JOE QUESADA
EDITOR IN CHIEF

DAN BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER

ALAN FINE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

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WOLVERINE'S PLAN.

I WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING.

I WANNA KNOW WHAT'S IN IT FOR *ME*.

EVERYTHING.

7 THE HARD WAY

CONCLUSION

SO YOU'RE THE GUY WOLVERINE IS SO *FREAKED OUT* ABOUT.

TELL ME, IF YOU'RE SO *POWERFUL*, HOW COME *I'VE* NEVER HEARD OF YOU?

I'M POWERFUL *BECAUSE* YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF ME.

OOH, A MAN OF *MYSTERY*.

I *LIKE*.

TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW AND I'LL MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE, RUBY THURSDAY.

AND WHAT HAPPENS IF *I DON'T* GIVE YOU WHAT YOU WANT?

WILL YOU MAKE MY *NIGHTMARES* COME TRUE?

YOU *DON'T HAVE* NIGHTMARES.

BUT YOUR *DAUGHTER* DOES.

EVERY NIGHT.

THE NEXT DAY.

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?

GETTING MY HAIR DONE.

WHERE'S EVERYONE ELSE?

THEY'LL BE HERE LATER.

I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU.

ALONE.

ABOUT WHAT?

THINK YA KNOW WHAT.

SIT DOWN.

RELAX.

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?

TELL ME THE TRUTH.

VISITING A FRIEND.

A *KNOWN ASSOCIATE?* YOU KNOW BETTER THAN THAT.

A FRIEND WHO OWED ME *MONEY.*

SO, NOT *REALLY* A FRIEND.

NO.

NOT *REALLY.*

ANY *OTHER* QUESTIONS?

WHAT'S YOUR FRIEND'S *NAME?*

NOT GONNA SAY.

WHY NOT?

BECAUSE I DON'T THINK THEY'D APPRECIATE AN *X-MAN* SHOWING UP ON THEIR DOORSTEP, *ASKING* ABOUT ME.

SEEM AWFULLY CONCERNED ABOUT SOMEBODY THAT AIN'T REALLY YER *FRIEND...*

WHAT *CONCERNS* ME IS THAT THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE MONEY THEY *OWED* ME. I CONVINCED THEM TO GO *GET* IT.

AND YOU DON'T WANT ME INTERFERING?

NO. I DON'T.

YOU NEED MONEY?

I JUST GOT UNEXPECTEDLY BUSTED OUT OF PRISON. MY PERSONAL FINANCES ARE IN... *DISARRAY.*

DID HE USE THAT AGAINST YOU?

WHO?

THINK YA *KNOW* WHO.

HAS ROMULUS APPROACHED YOU?

NO.

SNFF

NO TELLTALE FLUSH O' SWEAT, NO SKIP IN THE HEARTBEAT... *NOTHIN'*. RUBY'S BODY IS A MASS OF ORGANIC CIRCUITRY, MORE *MACHINE* THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

TRUTH OR LIE, I CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE.

WONDER IF SHE KNOWS THAT?

NOPE.

GUESS NOT.

YOU... SOLD ME OUT.

I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO.

WHAT YOU HAD TO DO--

SLASSH

--WAS ROT IN THAT *PRISON*. I GOT YOU *OUT*.

AND YOU THINK *I OWE* YOU?!

THINK AGAIN.

THWOK!

THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON IN THIS WHOLE WORLD THAT I OWE *ANYTHING* TO...

...AND IT'S *NOT* YOU.

ROMULUS *FOUND* SOMETHIN'--BY THE SOUND OF IT, SOME*ONE*-- TO USE AGAINST HER.

DUNNO WHO IT IS...

...BUT IT'S PRETTY DAMN CLEAR SHE'S WILLIN' TO DO ANYTHING TO PROTECT 'EM.

GUESS WHAT, RUBY?

SO AM I.

THAT ALL YA GOT?

CHOOOOM!!

YOU STUBBY LITTLE DIRTBAG--

--WHY DID YOU INVOLVE ME IN THIS?

I'M SORRY.

I HAD TO.

SSASHH!!

I HAVE MY OWN TO PROTECT.

WHATEVER HE PROMISED YOU HE'D DO...

...IS A LIE.

OR *NOT* DO...

ONCE HE HAS WHAT HE WANTS FROM YOU, YOU'RE EXPENDABLE.

WELL, THEN.

SSHHHUKK!

GUESS I'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE.

THIS ISN'T MY FIRST TIME AROUND THE BLOCK, WOLVERINE--I KNOW HOW THIS WORKS.

I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.

I KNOW YOU CAN.

I JUST HOPE YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF WHOEVER IT IS YER *FIGHTIN'* FOR, TOO.

GOOD LUCK...

...YER GONNA NEED IT.

FOUR GUYS AGAINST ONE GIRL?

SOUNDS LIKE MY KINDA PARTY.

COVER!

WRROOSSHH!

SHAKK! SHAKK!

SHAKK! SHAKK! SHAKK!

OH, HOW CUTE.

SO, YOU TWO ARE *TOGETHER*, THEN?

HHRRAAOHH!

HEY, I WASN'T *JUDGING* YOU...

KRAKK!

BUT YOU ARE MAKING HIM *ANGRY*.

YOU WON'T LIKE HIM WHEN HE'S ANGRY.

YOU'RE OUTTA YOUR LEAGUE, *PENCIL-PUSHER...*

I KNOW THAT.

I'M JUST DISTRACTING YOU.

SLASHH

WWSSSHHH!

YOU CAN PUT YOUR SWORDS AWAY.

I HAVE HER.

SHE'S CHARGING UP AGAIN!

GET RID OF HER!

WHROOF!

"AAAAAAAHHHHH!

UNNGH...

KRAKOOM!

...?

NNNNOOOOO!

PUTTIN' RUBY BACK IN PRISON MEANS SHE'S NO LONGER A *LOOSE END*–ROMULUS WON'T WASTE TIME ON HER.

ESPECIALLY SINCE HE'S GONNA BE PUTTIN' ALL HIS RESOURCES TOWARD *ME*.

HE KNOWS MY PLAN.

ROMULUS? HE *KNOWS*?!

YEAH. EVERYTHING.

RUBY SPILLED.

ROMULUS IS GONNA MOVE FAST-- HE ALREADY HAS A *HEAD START* ON ME. HE'S GONNA ISOLATE EVERY ELEMENT AN' EITHER *NEGATE* IT OR TURN IT *AGAINST* ME.

ONCE HE'S CUT ME OFF FROM EVERYTHING, HE'S GONNA HIT ME WITH *EVERYTHING HE'S GOT.*

HE'S GONNA MISS BY A $%&*#' MILE.

THIS WAS ALL A SETUP. A *RED HERRING.*

...WHAT?

I PUT IT UP FOR SALE AN' ROMULUS BOUGHT *EVERY SINGLE BIT OF IT.*

SO...THIS WHOLE *PLAN* OF YOURS...

WASN'T MY PLAN *AT ALL*, ACTUALLY.

THE BRONX; THE NEXT DAY.

"THEN... WHOSE PLAN *WAS* IT?"

"HE GOES BY THE NAME *THE ANSWER.*"

I'M... SORRY.

YOU *KNEW* RUBY COULDN'T BE TRUSTED. THAT SHE'D *BETRAY* ME.

YES.

IT'S... *WHAT SHE DOES.*

BUT YOU LET ME GO AHEAD, *ANYWAY.*

BECAUSE *I LOVE HER.* BECAUSE I WANT US TO BE *TOGETHER* AGAIN.

I HAD TO GET HER OUT OF THAT PRISON.

YOU WERE THE ANSWER.

AGAIN...I'M *SORRY.*

YOU JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S *LIKE,* LOVING SOMEONE WHO IS... *INCAPABLE* OF LOVING YOU BACK.

YEAH.

I DO.

THE ANSWER'S PLAN IS A BUST--ROMULUS KNOWS *EVERYTHING*. HE'LL USE *EVERY RESOURCE HE HAS* TO ARMOR HIMSELF *AGAINST* IT.

MEANIN' I GOT THE BASTARD *RIGHT WHERE I WANT HIM.*

SEE, *THE ANSWER* WAS ONLY THE FIRST PERSON I WENT TO. I HAD A *BACKUP.*

AN' BOY, DID HE DELIVER.

ROMULUS KNOWS ME TOO WELL-- ANYTHING I COULDA COME UP WITH, HE'D HAVE SEEN COMIN' AN' FIGURED OUT A WAY TO USE IT *AGAINST* ME AN' *FOR HIMSELF.*

IN ORDER FOR ME TO PLAY ROMULUS OUTTA POSITION, I NEEDED TO COME UP WITH A PLAN THAT WAS *SO OUTSIDE THE BOX* THAT *NOBODY* COULD EVER FIGURE IT OUT.

THE ANSWER'S PLAN WAS *GOOD...*

...BUT *THIS* GUY'S WAS *BETTER.*

TOLD YA IT'D WORK!

END.

NEXT